D-04 : THE DIURNAL FEEDING PATTERN OF CICHLID FRY IN THE VICTORIA RESERVOIR

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The diurnal feeding rhythm of cichlid fry in the Victoria reservoir was monitored at three hourly intervals, using stomach fullness as an index of feeding intensity. Studies were also carried out to determine the effects of temperature and light intensity on feeding under laboratory conditions.

Under natural conditions a definite feeding rhythm has been established in the fry. The feeding peak was at mid-day, while the lowest feeding intensity was after midnight until dawn. Food ingestion was observed to be much higher during the day time. Laboratory experiments confirmed that both temperature and light influence the feeding intensity. A temperature range between 25^{o} - $30^{o}C$ has been found to be the optimum.

The cichlid fry are daylight feeders, whose peak feeding time does not appear to coincide with that of potential bird and piscine predators in the reservoir. Under hot drought conditions when the water temperature rises to around $35^{o}C$ the consequent thermal stress is likely to impede not only the feeding activity of these fry, but also endanger their survival.